



**For Immediate Release
January 18, 2006**

**Contacts: Vanessa Gulati, 617-626-1119
Bill Salomaa, 617-626-1410**

**EAST HARTFORD AVENUE IN UXBRIDGE REOPENS TO TRAFFIC AS THE
STATE COMPLETES EMERGENCY REPAIRS AT RICE CITY POND DAM**

BOSTON: The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in conjunction with officials from the Town of Uxbridge and state officials announced that emergency repairs to Rice City Pond dam and East Hartford Avenue have been completed. The road reopened overnight and will be ready for public motor vehicle traffic on Wednesday morning.

On October 16, 2005 East Hartford Avenue in Uxbridge was closed by DCR in cooperation with Uxbridge town officials. Closure of this heavily traveled critical route in town was due to the damage Rice City Pond dam suffered during extreme rain events in October. The water in Rice City Pond rose well above normal levels behind the dam and caused the downstream slope embankment to suffer an extensive slide that compromised stability of the dam and a portion of East Hartford Avenue which is located on the dam crest.

"I understand the inconvenience that closure of the road presented, and I thank the citizens of Uxbridge and town officials for their patience while DCR made these emergency repairs," said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. "I also thank town officials for their contribution to the project, which included setting up and maintaining the emergency detour, helping monitor the dam site and assisting with coordination of reopening the road."

Other partners assisted DCR with the repairs. Contractor PARE Engineering of Norwood evaluated damage and prepared emergency repair plans and specifications immediately following closure of the road. The Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) conducted underwater inspection of the bridges at the dam and confirmed the bridge structures had not sustained storm-related damage. The Uxbridge Conservation Commission, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expedited the environmental permitting process.

DCR awarded the \$444,920 construction repair contract to construction contractor Gardner Engineering, Inc. of Chicopee on December 8, 2005 with a scheduled completion date of January 16, 2006. The emergency repair items included stabilization of the failed slope by placement of approximately 3000 tons of rock fill, about 3000 cubic yards of soils and reconstruction of about 325 feet of roadway on the dam crest.

-more-

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
165 Day Boulevard
South Boston, MA 02127
617-727-5290 617-727-7059 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
Lt. Governor

Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Stephen H. Burrington, Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

“I am pleased that DCR and MassHighway have worked expeditiously in the past few weeks to open the roadway,” said State Senator Richard Moore. “I regret that area citizens have been inconvenienced by the road closure, but starting tomorrow this important route will be safely open again. Looking ahead, I will ask the two agencies to convene, in the coming weeks, a meeting of the relevant local and state agencies to discuss the long-term solutions to the structural issues with both the dam and roadway.”

“I would like to complement all the DCR and local officials that worked diligently to correct what was a major problem,” said State Representative Paul Kujawski.

While this concludes emergency repairs, DCR plans to complete permanent repairs in the near future. An agreement has already been reached with PARE Engineering to conduct preliminary evaluations for comprehensive permanent repairs to dam. As with the emergency repairs, DCR will be coordinating its efforts with MHD and Uxbridge town officials.

“I hear rain is forecasted for the reopening of the dam; how fitting that rain was there to close the road and rain will be there again to reopen it. This will be the first test for the newly reconstructed dam,” State Representative Jennifer Callahan said. “The repair of the dam was a top project for local and state officials. I am very happy to have worked closely with local emergency management teams to keep it a priority. This is an important east-west connecting route for Uxbridge. Getting the repairs done in a timely way was the most important thing. I want to thank the DCR for partnering with us to get this project done as soon as possible.”

###